

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A smart audio guide system for use in conjunction with an interactive content distribution system that includes a distribution head-end that makes programming available for viewing on a video display device at a viewer subsystem, the viewer subsystem including an audio unit to provide audio for the video display unit, the smart audio guide system comprising:

a recommendation engine for providing a customized viewing-recommendations list for the viewer subsystem based upon the programming available from the interactive content distribution system and a customized viewing profile developed for the viewer subsystem;

a processing unit configured and operative to implement the smart audio guide system functions;

a smart audio guide audio package that includes at least a plurality of smart audio guide audio clips corresponding to the customized viewing-recommendations list; and

a smart guide actuator that is configured and operative in response to one or more predetermined conditions to activate the processing unit;

wherein the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips are generated by a head-end of the interactive content distribution system and stored in a database at the head-end, [[and]]

wherein said processing unit is configured and operative to cause the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips to be uttered in a predetermined mode at the viewer subsystem via the audio unit when activated to identify programs recommended for viewing at the viewer subsystem based upon the customized viewing-recommendations list, and

wherein as the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips being uttered a corresponding visual presentation of the customized viewing-recommendations list is modified respectively.

2. (currently amended) The smart audio guide system of claim 1, ~~wherein the predetermined mode is one wherein~~ at least one of the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips ~~are uttered without a corresponding to visual presentation a recommended program~~ of the customized viewing-recommendations list is generated by combining one or more audio clips identifying the recommended program and at least one standardized audio clip for the viewer subsystem.

3. (cancelled)

4. (currently amended) The smart audio guide system of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein:

the corresponding visual presentation is a graphical recommendation menu ~~[[,]]~~ and ~~wherein~~

the processing unit is further configured and operative to implement a focus frame that, upon each of the plurality of smart audio guide clips being uttered, visually focuses a corresponding program grid of the graphical recommendation menu, wherein the corresponding program grid is associated with a program identified by in-synchronization with the utterance of each of the plurality of the smart audio guide audio clip ~~[[clips]].~~

5. (currently amended) The smart audio guide system of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein:

the corresponding visual presentation is an electronic program guide and ~~wherein~~

the processing unit is configured and operative to implement a focus frame that visually focuses a corresponding program grid of the electronic program guide, wherein the corresponding program grid is associated with a program identified by in-synchronization with the utterance of each of the plurality of the smart audio guide audio clip ~~[[clips]].~~

6. (original) The smart audio guide system of claim 1 further comprising a speech generating unit, and wherein the smart audio guide audio package further comprises a plurality of smart audio guide text files;

and wherein the processing unit is configured and operative to implement the speech generating unit to convert the plurality of smart audio guide text files into the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips.

7. (original) The smart audio guide system of claim 1 wherein the viewer subsystem further includes a viewer control unit and wherein the smart audio guide actuator comprises a button on the viewer control unit, which when depressed, activates the processing unit to cause the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips to be uttered in the predetermined mode at the viewer subsystem via the audio unit.

8. (original) The smart audio guide system of claim 1 wherein the smart audio guide actuator comprises a set of instructions that activates the processing unit to cause the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips to be uttered in the predetermined mode at the viewer subsystem via the audio unit when the video display device at the viewer subsystem is initially activated.

9. (original) The smart audio guide system of claim 1 wherein the smart audio guide actuator comprises a set of instructions that activates the processing unit to cause the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips to be uttered in the predetermined mode at the viewer subsystem via the audio unit at the conclusion of a programming period.

10 – 11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The smart audio guide system of claim 1 wherein the processing unit is configured and operative to temporarily discontinue the audio associated with programming being displayed via the video display device at the viewer

subsystem when the plurality of smart audio guide audio clips ~~[[are]]~~ is being uttered in a predetermined mode at the viewer subsystem via the audio unit.

13 – 18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus adapted for use in an interactive content distribution system, the apparatus comprising:

a recommendation subsystem configured to generate recommendations of available programs based upon viewer profile information and viewer content selection history, wherein each recommended program ~~[[has]]~~ is associated with ~~[[it a]]~~ at least one respective audio clip identifying content of the recommended program; and

a viewer subsystem configured to generate audiovisual signals associated with a program selection mechanism, ~~for generating audiovisual signals~~ including audio clips associated with at least one recommended program.

20. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the audiovisual signals include image representative signals associated with an electronic program guide (EPG) [[EPG]] and wherein the audiovisual signals are configured such that, upon generating of each of the audio clips associated with the at least one recommended program, a portion of the EPG corresponding to the at least one recommended program becomes visually focused.

21. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the audiovisual signals are adapted for presentation via a television.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein programs and their respective audio clips are stored at a programs database at a head end within the interactive content distribution system.

23. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein normal presentation of the EPG is modified in response to the presence of recommended content within an EPG page.

24. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein an audio clip associated with recommended content is presented in response to the presence of recommended content within an EPG page.

25. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein an audio clip associated with recommended content is presented in response to user manipulation of the EPG to potentially recommended content.

26. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein in response to a user selection of a predefined graphical button each of a plurality of audio clips associated with recommended content is presented.

27. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a speech generating unit configured to provide audio data related to recommended content.

28. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ adapted for use in an interactive content distribution system, the method comprising:

generating recommendations of available programs based upon viewer profile information and viewer content selection history, wherein each recommended program ~~[[has]]~~ is associated with ~~[[it a]]~~ at least one respective audio clip identifying content of the recommended program;

retrieving, from a head end of the interactive content distribution system, at least one audio clip ~~associated with~~ identifying content of one of the recommended programs ~~program;~~

retrieving at least one standardized audio clip; and

generating audiovisual signals associated with a program selection mechanism, the audiovisual signals including combined the at least one retrieved audio clip and one

or more of the at least one standardized audio clip to identify the content of the recommended program.